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and without visible means of support, such as fill the average text-book on civil government, the author of "The Critical Period of American History" evinces little interest. In the discussion of local government, which occupies the first 139 pages, and indeed throughout the book, his method is historical. He explains existing political institutions by showing out of what they developed and why their development took the course it did. In consequence, many facts about government are rendered not only easy to remember, which is, to be sure, desirable from the standpoint of examinations, but also possible to understand, which is at least equally desirable from a higher point of view. State and federal government occupy the latter half of the book. "A few words about politics," which close the text, treat civil service reform, the Australian ballot and "corrupt practices" with a vigor that ought to convince, and a reserve that cannot offend.

Besides an appendix, containing, in addition to the regulation documents, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1638) and such novel features as a facsimile of a Massachusetts blanket ballot and a view of the interior of a polling place, there are at the end of each section "questions on the text" and further at the end of each chapter "suggestive questions." In order to answer the latter, the pupil must frequently go outside his text book to some of the other works mentioned in Mr. Fiske's "bibliographical notes." For the questions themselves the author acknowledges his obligation to Mr. F. A. Hill, Head Master of the English High School in Cambridge.

Mr. Fiske has not given us a school history of American politics. That field was already occupied by another able writer, the late Alexander Johnson. But he has given, to a large extent, such an account of the development of governmental forms in our country as will make the history of the United States doubly interesting to students of its civil government, and its civil government doubly interesting to students of its history. The book is worthy its author's high reputation. It brings two closely related subjects to one another's support in a way that no other American text-book of civil government has ever attempted. It makes far greater demands upon the teacher than the ordinary analytical compendium. But if well taught, it ought to reward the effort it requires.

Charles H. Hull.

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History of English Literature, vol. II, part I. (Wyclif, Chaucer, Earliest Drama, Renaissance), by BERNHARD TEN BRINK, translated by WM. CLARKE ROBINSON. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

As we take up the volume before us we are forcibly reminded

of the great loss to literary criticism through the death of its learned author. A little more than one year ago Professor Ten Brink died at the age of fifty-one. He was preëminent even among scholars in Germany, since he combined in a remarkable degree the knowledge and painstaking care of the philologist, with the delicate appreciation of the literary critic. In this respect he easily ranked first in Germany, and it is doubtful if his equal in his own special field is to be found in England or America.

But lest this high praise should be misunderstood, and in order that his work may be brought more prominently before teachers who may read this review, let me point out, if possible, in what particulars Professor Ten Brink was so eminent. First then, he exhibits nothing of purely subjective or dilettante literary criticism. There was nothing of the spirit which relies on the principle—what I like is good, and what I dislike is bad and to be condemned. He studied literature as reflecting the personality of the author, as a mirror of the age, as an artistic creation. In order to understand an author he sought to understand the time in which he lived, the sources from which he drew his materials, the special influences under which he wrote, as well as the genius of the man shown in his perfected work. In all these respects, although naturally not all of his conclusions have been accepted by scholars, he is the safest guide to our early English literature. For these reasons, therefore, his book should be placed first on the reference shelves, and be consulted with confidence both for its accuracy in fact and its wisdom in opinion.

So much for those who know Ten Brink but slightly. In particular, the volume before us deals with two principal subjects, the great poet of the middle period of our literature, Chaucer, and the early drama. The part devoted to Chaucer would alone make this volume of exceptional value, for Ten Brink has long been a foremost authority on the poet and has already published two volumes indispensable to the scholar, a Chaucer grammar and his Chaucer Studies, the results of which are embodied in the book we review. The Chaucer portion (pp. 33-206) includes a running story of Chaucer's life, of which by far the largest part is devoted to his works, discussed in chronological order, with special reference to the life of the time and the various external influences affecting the poet. A good example of Ten Brink's method may be seen in his discussion of the *Knight's Tale* (pp. 63-72). The source of this in Boccaccio's *Teseida* is first pointed out, with the relation of the *Teseida* story to the *Thebais* of Statius. The changes for artistic effect which Chaucer makes in the *Palamon and Arcite*, his first version of the story, are then shown, and finally the second version of the same story, the *Knight's Tale*, is thoroughly discussed. As an example of Ten Brink's treatment of external influences upon the poet may be cited those parts of

books VI and VII which relate to Chaucer's relations with John of Gaunt.

It is not to be expected that in part of a single volume there should be included such elaborate studies as those of Professor Lounsbury, recently published in this country, but as a concise critical commentary this volume is indispensable to the student of the greatest early English poet.

The second part of the present volume breaks off from the continuous discussion of the minor poets following Chaucer, to consider the origin of the drama and the earliest examples of it in England. The story is, in all its details, an exceedingly entertaining one, and it may be said that the material is here brought together in compact form for the first time in English. The earliest English drama arose about the middle of the thirteenth century. From that time until the outburst into full flower in the Elizabethan period, the drama exhibits a slow but gradual evolution through mysteries, miracle and morality plays, most of which give scant prophecy of a Marlowe or a Shakespeare. Still the early dramas, rude as they were, give evidence of the widespread taste for the dramatic, and with all their crudities must be considered as the seed, which sprang up to such glorious fruitage in the following centuries. One might wish for more quotations illustrating the earliest dramatic literature, but this was clearly not possible within the compass of the book before us, which we must consider as but a handbook to be used beside the more elaborate personal study of the literature itself.

There is one form of subjective criticism, often combined with literary history, which is seldom attempted in Germany and is not to be found to any considerable extent in this volume. It may be called, for want of a better name, literary interpretation. This form of criticism, almost the only one ever attempted in England, is, when well done, not only interesting but inspiring; when poorly done, however, it descends to dilettantism or sickly sentimentality. It may be urged on the one side for the present book, that this form of criticism is not strictly literary history; and it may be pointed out on the other, if a lack should be felt on that account, that literary interpretation can be most easily supplied from other sources. Nor should this be regarded as detracting in the slightest degree from this eminently scholarly work.

Another volume will complete all that we can have of Ten Brink's *History of English Literature*, and it is hoped that such encouragement will be given to the present work that the publishers will be stimulated to prepare the remaining part with all reasonable speed.

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